THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Simplification of mining policy

828. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to simplify the mining policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Australia proposes to have mining cooperation with India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (b) A High Level Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Shri Anwar-ul Hoda, Member, Planning Commission to review the National Mineral Policy, 1993 and recommend possible amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 to give a fillip to private investment in the sector. The Committee, *inter alia,* will also review the existing procedures for granting reconnaissance permit, prospecting licence and mining lease and suggest ways for their streamlining and simplification.

(c) and (d) A India-Australian Joint Working Group on Energy and Minerals has already been constituted under the aegis of the India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission to facilitate cooperation through exchange of information, trade promotion and investment in energy and mineral sector for mutual benefit.

Welfare measures for tribal workers

†829. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any order, recommendation or suggestion for welfare measures, such as construction of residential colony school buildings, lighting and arrangement of water, for tribal workers working for captive

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.